



# Second Cleanup Decision Finalized

Lower Fox River and Green Bay Site  
Northeast Wisconsin

July 2003

## Public meeting

EPA and DNR will explain the cleanup plans selected for the sections of the Lower Fox River from Little Rapids to DePere, DePere to the mouth of the river at Green Bay, and Green Bay at a public meeting in the Green Bay area.

**Date:** August 19, 2003

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Location:** Brown County Library  
Lower Level  
515 Pine St.  
Green Bay, Wis.

For special needs or accommodations, please contact: Susan Pastor at (312) 353-1325, or toll free at (800) 621-8431 Ext. 31325.

## Web sites

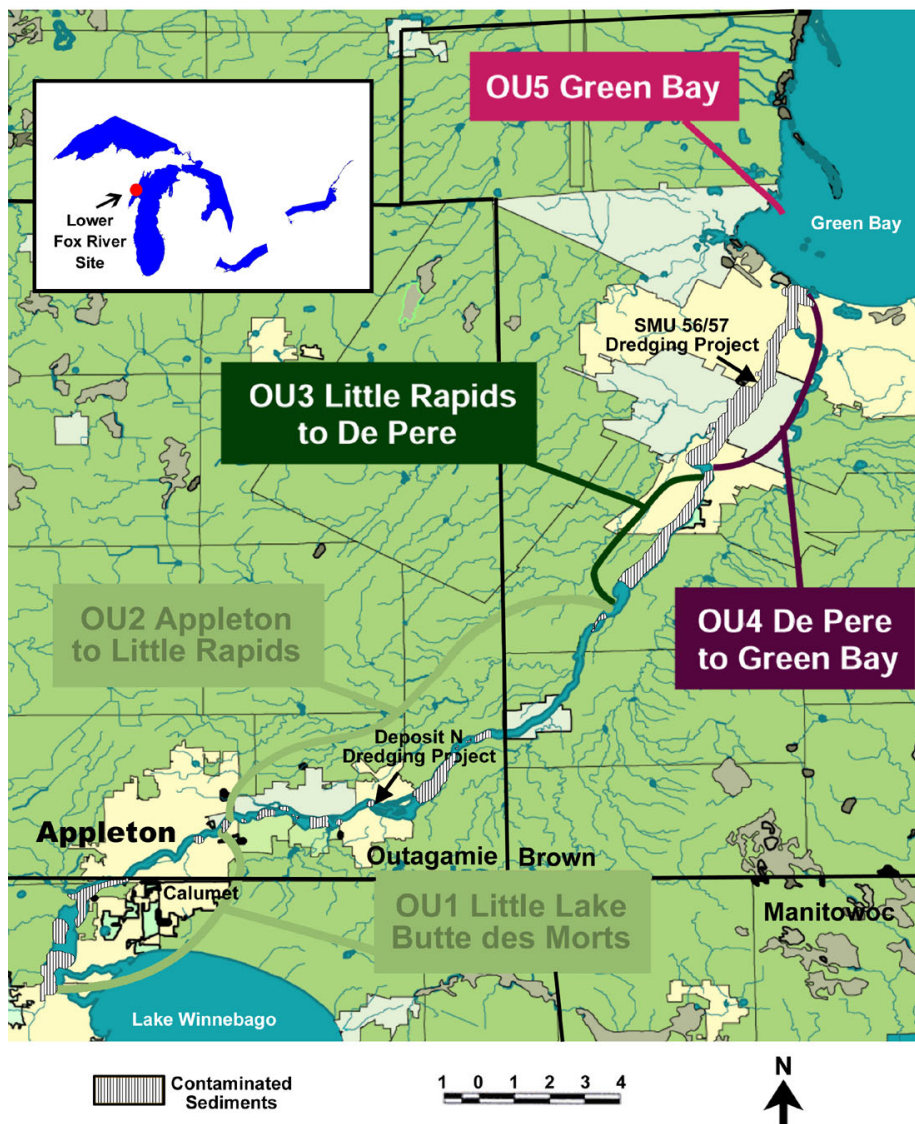
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver>

<http://www.fws.gov>

For more detailed information about the selected cleanup plan for OUs 3, 4 and 5 of the Lower Fox River, please read the record of decision. The record of decision can be found at each of the libraries listed on the back page of this fact sheet and also on the Web.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently signed a document called a record of decision. The document describes the final cleanup plan for the sections (reaches) of the Lower Fox River from Little Rapids to DePere, DePere to the mouth of the river at Green Bay, and Green Bay itself.



*OU - This refers to an operable unit. An operable unit is a term used to describe a certain portion of a site based on similar features and characteristics. For ease of management, the Lower Fox River site has been divided into five operable units based on geographic location and differing river conditions. This decision covers OUs 3, 4 and 5.*



*Dredging of the river may involve use of a hydraulic dredge, similar to this one.*

### **Little Rapids to DePere reach cleanup (OU 3)**

The cleanup of this reach will involve:

- Dredging 586,800 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from this section.
- Dredging an additional 9,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment in OU 2 (Appleton to Little Rapids) just upstream from the Little Rapids Dam.

Estimated cost: \$27.5 million

### **DePere to Green Bay reach cleanup (OU 4)**

The cleanup of this reach will involve:

- Dredging 5.88 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment. This will remove about 90 percent of the PCBs in the river.

Estimated cost: \$257.5 million

### **OUs 3 and 4 will have the same components:**

- Pumping contaminated sediment through a temporary pipeline to settling basins (ponds).
- Letting sediment settle naturally, pumping water from settling basins, treating the water and returning the treated water to the river.
- Moving dewatered sediment to a nearby landfill for final disposal.

By removing the contaminated sediment, EPA and DNR estimate this reach of the river will have an average PCB level lower than the cleanup goal of 1 part per million (which is equal to one penny in \$10,000). Capping in limited areas would also be allowed if that proved to be less costly than dredging, or if dredging alone were not sufficient. These activities will reduce the risk to people and the environment.

If landfill disposal is not available, EPA and DNR may use a technology called vitrification, which would be proposed to the public in an amendment to this record of decision. In this case, vitrification is the process of melting sediment to bind it into a granular, glassy, solid substance, rendering it clean.



## Green Bay (OU 5)

EPA and DNR have selected monitored natural recovery as the cleanup plan for Green Bay. This cleanup relies on natural processes to break down, bury or dilute the PCBs in the sediment. It includes a program designed to monitor the levels of PCBs in sediment, water and fish tissue. The cleanup of Green Bay will also include dredging of PCB-contaminated sediment in the area near the mouth of the river. This dredging would be done along with the dredging of OU 4. EPA and DNR have chosen not to dredge the bay because:

- Removal of the PCBs in the river sediment will greatly reduce the amount of PCBs entering the bay.
- PCB levels in the bay are generally much lower than in the river.
- Active cleanup in the bay would not significantly reduce risk.

Estimated cost: \$39.6 million

### Objective of the cleanup

The objective of this cleanup is to reduce the risks posed to people and the environment from the PCBs in the Lower Fox River sediment in OUs 3, 4 and 5.

## The next step

EPA and DNR will begin discussions with the companies considered potentially responsible for the PCB contamination about doing the cleanup. Design and cleanup planning will also begin during these negotiations. The selected cleanup plan will be refined during the design phase. Once the designs are completed and approved by EPA and DNR, a contractor will be hired to begin the work.

To determine how well the cleanup is working, after five years, EPA and DNR will review the cleanup to ensure that it is protecting people and the environment.

## Background

PCBs were discovered in sediment and water in the Lower Fox River in the early 1970s. PCBs are of concern because they accumulate in the food chain. They have been linked to harmful effects in people, fish and wildlife. Because of these concerns, the manufacture of PCBs in the United States was stopped in 1977. Until the 1970s, PCBs were discharged into the river by area paper mills.

The Lower Fox River site includes approximately 39 miles of the Lower Fox River as well as Green Bay. The river portion of the site extends from the outlet at Lake Winnebago and continues downstream to the river mouth at Green Bay. The bay portion of the site includes all of Green Bay, which is 119 miles long and 23 miles wide. The site has been divided into five OUs. (See map on Page 1.) They are:

OU 1 – Little Lake Butte des Morts

OU 2 – Appleton to Little Rapids

OU 3 – Little Rapids to DePere

OU 4 – DePere to Green Bay

OU 5 – Green Bay

EPA and DNR issued a record of decision in January 2003 selecting the cleanup plans for OUs 1 and 2. This record of decision is for the remaining three OUs. This type of phased approach was done to speed up the overall cleanup project while gaining experience to be used in future phases.



*Monitored natural recovery includes sampling for PCB levels in fish, water and sediment.*

## For more information

For more information about the Lower Fox River and Green Bay site cleanup, please contact:

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## Information repositories and administrative records

Copies of the record of decision and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup will be available in the reference sections of:

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 104 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200

An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the cleanup plan was based, will be available at the DNR office, 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay; DNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 101 S. Webster St., Madison; and EPA Records Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

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United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Region 5  
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)  
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